

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. B-5028

### 1. Name

Historic ~~502-514 South Dexter Street~~ 502-514 Archer Street  
and / common

### 2. Location

street & number ~~502-514 South Dexter Street~~ 502-514 Archer Street  
city, town Baltimore  
state & zip code Maryland 21205 county

### 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

### 4. Owner of Property

name  
street & number telephone  
city, town state & zip code

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Land Records liber  
street & number Clarence Mitchell Courthouse folio  
city, town Baltimore State Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title  
date federal state county local  
depository for survey records  
city, town state & zip code

## 7. Description

**Condition**

☐ excellent  
☐ good  
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

**Check One**

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

**Check One**

☒ original site  
☐ moved:  
date of move: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This row of seven two-story, two-bay wide early Italianate-style brick houses with shed roofs and simple wooden cornices set on very high basements are typical of a type of small alley house built in Baltimore in the 1870s, particularly in the southwest region of the city. Perhaps to economize on lot sizes, the two-room-deep houses were elevated so that the kitchen could be placed in the basement, instead of in a one-story back building. In many cases, alley houses such as these are still occupied by working class families and many are still covered with the formstone put on in the 1950s or 1960s. All but one of these houses retain their original brick facades, which were always painted.

The houses are two stories in height, only two rooms deep and there is no backbuilding. The houses are constructed in running bond and were originally painted. Each house has a single hooded chimney located at the rear corner of the house. The shed roofs are capped by a wooden cornice consisting of a deeply projecting crown molding supported by block modillions, set above a plain, deep frieze area.

The tall, narrow window and door openings have flat wood lintels and sills. None of the original 2/2 sash survive and all windows are filled with 1/1 replacement sash. Doorways have single-light transoms, but most of these have been covered over. Doorways show a variety of replacement door types. The houses sit on high basements, lit by a tall sash. Each house is reached by seven metal, brick, or wooden steps. The basement can be entered directly from the street, the door being set under the stairs.

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### 3. Significance

Period	Area of significance	check one & justify			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theatre	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other: specify	

Specific dates c. 1875

Builder/Architect

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

These houses are significant as representing a relatively plain type of small street house that was constructed to provide inexpensive housing for the working class residents of the area, most of whom were German or Irish at the time of construction. The houses were built according to a pattern that was quite common to the city's working class neighborhoods of the middle and late nineteenth century. Recognizing that workers held different levels of jobs (and pay), builders created a hierarchy of house sizes (and prices) in the new neighborhoods going up to serve the expanding factory districts ringing the harbor and north-east and southwest of the central city. Builders acquired anywhere from an eighth to a half of a city block and built 14' to 15'-wide two-story houses on the main streets, and smaller, 11' to 13'-wide two-story houses on the narrower streets bisecting the blocks. Typically, in this period, main street houses might sell \$1,000 - \$1,500; small street houses for \$600 - \$800. Occasionally, the builder retained ownership of his small street houses to provide income for himself as rental properties. In this way people of varying means could afford to live in the same block. If they couldn't afford the purchase price of the small street houses, then they *could* afford the \$8 or so a month it would cost to rent one, while they saved to be able to buy their own home later.

The houses are especially significant because of their proximity to the Baltimore & Ohio railroad yards, the nation's first railroad, and its related railroad-oriented industries, like car and rail shops. Housing of this type was built to provide inexpensive housing for the wide variety of both Irish and German immigrants who came to southwest Baltimore to work in railroad-related industries in the decades after the Civil War.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

Mary Ellen Hayward and Charles Belfoure, *The Baltimore Rowhouse*  
(New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999)

## 10. Geographic Data

Acreage of nominated property

Quadrangle name

Verbal boundary description and justification

## 11. Form Prepared by

name / title Dr. Mary Ellen Hayward

Organization The Alley House Project

date

street & number 1306 Carrollton Ave.

telephone

city, town Baltimore

state & zip code Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of property rights.

Return to:

DHCP/DHCD

Maryland Historical Trust

100 Community Place

Crownsville MD 21032-2023



B.5028 502-514 Archer St.

McHENRY

S. POPPLETON

UNION FRUIT CO

B & O. R. R.  
HAY SHED

PARKIN

284

BARTLETT

IRON

ST.

ST.

YAN ST.

DAN ST.

DAVISON ST.

ST.

ST.

RAMSAY

COLUMBIA

W CROSS

WENSHAW MEMORIAL  
BREINHART ST.

ST. PETER

PARKIN

CAMPBELL

ST. PETERS

WYETH

WOODWARD

ST.

W. BAR

MANGOLD

ST. 858

W. HAMBURG

ST. JEROMES  
ROMAN CATH CH.

STERRETT

W. CROSS

BEAUCHAMPS  
NOVARTY CO.

B-5028  
502-514 Archer Street  
Block 0850 Lots 071-079  
Baltimore City  
Baltimore West Quad

